

General Synod met from 18-20 November. The discussions included the following:

A report from the ABC about his recent activity at home and abroad.

A debate on Intentional Evangelism which passed the following..

That this Synod in the light of the priority of evangelism and making new disciples:
support the formation of an Archbishops' Task Group on Evangelism ...
... a new call to prayer;

calls upon every diocesan and deanery synod and every PCC to spend the bulk of one meeting annually and some part of every meeting focusing on sharing experiences and initiatives for making new disciples; and
urge every local church in 2014 prayerfully to try at least one new way, appropriate to their local context, of seeking to make new disciples of Jesus Christ.

On Women Bishops the meeting approved a package of measures as the next steps to enable women to become bishops in the Church of England.

The Synod welcomed the package of proposals for the Draft Legislation of Women in the Episcopate.

The package of proposals follows the mandate set by the Synod in July and includes the first draft of a House of Bishops declaration and a disputes resolution procedure. This debate invited Synod to welcome the proposals and the five guiding principles, already agreed by the House of Bishops, which underpin them. 5 Principles are at the end of this report.

Proposing the package of measures the Right Reverend James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester said: "These measures look to the day when the Church of England as an ecclesial entity will have made a clear decision to open all orders of ministry to women and men without distinction, whereby all those so ordained are true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy."

The following motion was carried with 378 votes for, 8 against and 25 abstentions:
'That this Synod, welcoming the package of proposals in GS 1924 and the statement of principles endorsed by the House of Bishops at paragraph 12 of GS 1886, invite the House of Bishops to bring to the Synod for consultation in February a draft declaration and proposals for a mandatory disputes resolution procedure which build on the agreement reached by the Steering Committee as a result of its facilitated discussions.'

Revision will take place in February 2014 and the dioceses will be asked to consider by May 22nd 2014.

The vote for Final approval could be before the synod at the July 2014 group of session in York.

The archbishop of York gave a presidential address on confronting poverty and various approaches. His address included food poverty, the work of the Church Urban Fund on a needs-based approach and asset-based approach also touching on the poverty of vision.

There was also a debate on The Church School of the Future 'Cahdwick' report. which covered:

Challenges to the Church school system

Change of rationale for the academy programme: 'forced' conversion of failing schools

Diocesan sponsorship: meeting the demand for school improvement capability

Responding to 'forced conversions': role of DBE?

Decline of LA funding and services

Threats to Religious Education

Building capacity of DEBs, needs imagination and courage

self-review process for every diocese recommended

10 Marks of a high performing DBE

"I want us to be more distinctive, more inclusive and more effective"

There was also a debate on the work of the Elections Review group which concluded with the following motion being passed.

That this Synod request legislative proposals to be brought forward to make provision by 2020 for elections to the General Synod to be undertaken online; and make provision by 2015 for nominations for elections to the General Synod to be undertaken by email.

There were also farewells to:

Sir Anthony Hammond KCB QC, Standing Counsel of CofE

Bishop of Guildford, Christopher Hill

Bishop of Ripon & Leeds, John Packer

and various bits and bobs of legislative procedure and tidying up.

I look forward to being with you on 24th March 2014

5 Principals that underpin the consecration of Priests and Bishops.

- ☒ Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops, the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are the true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
- ☒ Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;
- ☒ Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;
- ☒ Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
- ☒ Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the Church of England.